

## FINDING A PLACE TO SIT DOWN

by [Steve Brown](#)

People do strange things sometimes that make sense only when taken in a broader context. Take for instance research that finds people always try to sit in the same place in meetings, shifting seats only rarely. Once people sit down, they just don't like to renegotiate where they are sitting, so they usually keep to what has worked in the past. A bit of psychology also comes into play, however, so bosses usually sit at the head of the table (often facing the exit); those who sit opposite are usually argumentative or want to show off their intelligence; while those who sit at the right of the boss are usually pretty happy. This got us thinking about other things you also might find interesting this morning as you get going.

Consider the surge in tablets such as iPads and the fact that newer ones have cameras on both sides. That simple feature allows people to not only take pictures with the tablet, but also use it to scan checks and create videos. Once created, videos can be uploaded through Skype onto YouTube or you can do video calls with as many as four people at the same time. Tablets deliver conference calls on steroids. For banks, the tablet not only allows users to make remote deposits; but also gives branch staff a power tool to demonstrate products, services, offer financial planning or otherwise advertise and educate customers interactively. One of the most effective techniques in selling is to transfer ownership, so handing over an iPad to a customer and having them take a new product for a "test drive" themselves is a great way to accomplish that and shorten the sales cycle. Next up, tablets could incorporate retinal or other biometric scanning, giving bankers a tool that can be leveraged in even more new and exciting ways so stay tuned.

Given advances in technology and the changing workplace environment, consider the business development, deposit or lending officer roles. You may not know it, but if you polled all of your employees, you would probably find out (as research shows) that 60% say they don't need to be in the office to be productive and 66% want more work flexibility. This may not work for all jobs, but some can make sense and reduce your office footprint costs over time. Face to face selling is still one of the most effective techniques and as we frequently say around here - no one in the office can buy what you have to offer, so get on the road and talk to customers that can. Freeing customer facing employees from the shackles of the office, teaching them to leverage technology to keep everyone informed and leveraging up face time with customers and potential customers is very effective. Customers that hear first hand how a service can solve a problem, save time, save money or otherwise fill a need is a good way to consistently grow. Think about putting your team in the field even more and taking your business out directly to where your customers are to enhance opportunities.

Finally, get some insight into social networking. The latest research finds 60% of all Facebook advertising comes from small and midsize businesses. These are the backbone of community banking customers, so even at a high level, just staying on top of what they are doing and where they are doing it will keep you in tune, help you find new customers and determine which ones are gaining traction or increasing profitability through this channel.

Banking is a difficult industry right now and change can be good (plus it is inevitable), so keep your mind open to potential opportunities to capture new customers. Once you set things in motion, to

help others accept change at the bank try moving around and picking a new seat at your next meeting just to shake things up. Then, sit back and watch all the squirming that goes on in the room when you do.

## **BANK NEWS**

### **Amex**

The card company famous for its upscale marketing and fees introduced a reloadable debit card without fees with the exception of ATM usage. The card is targeted at the general customer. However, one major drawback that we see is it doesn't allow for reloading with direct deposit and while it can use the Green Dot reloading, it comes with a \$4.95 fee.

### **Busted**

Prosecutors claim a former Citigroup accountant embezzled \$19.2mm over 20 months by wiring money from the bank's debt adjustment account and its interest expense account to his personal account.

### **Lawsuit Settled**

JPMorgan has settled charges that it misled investors about a complex mortgage-bond portfolio by agreeing to pay \$153.6mm. Other large firms are expected to announce similar deals, as the SEC forces firms to pay penalties for transactions that helped fuel the financial crisis.

### **Email**

According to Listserv, an e-mail management company, the average banker sends 33 e-mails per day. Last year 107T emails were sent and 89% of them were spam. In 1985, 90% of emails were business related; now just 8% are.

### **Inflation**

The average car insurance premium has risen 5% in the past 2Ys.

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